Candidates in Thier Races Through the Decades

BY JOHN ELFRETH WATKINS.

FOR a brief half hour let us follow the candidates of both parties, as they have raced side by side through the decades. Ignoring their political theories entirely, let us see the contrasts of their respective fortunes at the same periods of their careers.

The first contestant in the race was Judson Harmon, of Ohio. He was four years old when Champ Clark started running, nearly nine years and a half old when La Follette entered and nearly eleven when Woodrow Wilson first became a contestant. He was eleven and a half when Taft arrived upon the course, nearly thirteen when Roosevelt joined the contest, and past sixteen when little Oscar Underwood first placed his chubby foot upon the ring.

The first collective view which we can get of these contestants is during the exciting period of the Civil War. Within those four years Judson Harmon, a minister's son, entered Denison University, a Baptist institution of Granville, O., where he was to take his A. B. the year after Lee's surrender. When Sumter was fired on Clark, a poor itinerant dentist's motherless boy, was doing chores for a Kentucky farmer, that he might work out his sister's board, as well as his own, while he attended the neighboring village school; but before the war was over he had, when a lad of fourteen, sought a shorter road to fortune by way of a six-dollar-a-week clerkship in the cross-roads store, which mart was, however, soon to go out of business.

Underwood, born in the second year of the war, was at the close of that struggle carried from Kentucky to St. Paul, along with his invalid mother, who went part of the way on a mattress. The father of the saddened family was moving his law practice to the Minnesota city, that his faithful wife might regain her health, which she did, having lately entered the venerable category of the octogenarian.

Some Boyhood Contrasts.

"Lub" Taft (for thus was he nicknamed on account of his size) was in those bloody days principally engaged in outgrowing his clothes. Young In outgrowing his clothes. Young Theodore Roosevelt was a frail lad in comparison. He suffered so painfully from mer nights his fond father would wrap him up in blankets and drive him out into the country, where the fresh, cool ozone relieved his paroxyms of smothering. Those war times were being spent by little Woodrow Wilson in the Southern parsonage of his father, who was a Presbyterian divine, and by little Bob La Follette in his native Wisconsin.

During the Reconstruction days Harmon, after graduating at Denison University, entered the Cincinnati Law School, where Clark and Taft are later to be trained as barristers. But before he follows hither Clark must continue to tread a thorny path. As a farm laborer and country schoolmaster he plods along until he can rake and scrape enough money together to put him in the University of Kentucky. Our younger contestants in the race for the presidency are during this time dividing their attentions between play and primary schools. If they did anything remarkable history has missed it thus far.

Expelled for Fighting Duel.

In the seventies all were to make records. In the first year of that decade Harmon, a lawyer of one year's practice, married, and three years later Clark, having been expelled from the senior class of the Kentucky University for fighting a duel in the classic style, entered Bethany College, a Campbellite institution of West Virginia, to gain his sheepskin, which he directly captured, taking first honors along with it. The same year he became president of Marshall College, West Virginia, at a salary of $1,400, along with which went the as yet unbroken record of being the youngest college "prexy" in America, for he was then but twenty-three. But yearning already for political honors, he decided that the law offered a straighter path. A few years later Woodrow Wilson was to reverse the order exactly and leave the law to become a college professor.

The year 1874 saw three of our candidates in Cincinnati.

Champ Clark had come here to study in the law school, Harmon, having finished at the same institution five years before, was now practicing law, and Taft, just graduated from the Woodward High School, was packing up to go to Yale. And while the future President, at New Haven, was starring, first as the archterror of the Yale "rushes" and later as a fiend for books as well as athletic prowess, Clark was starting his career in Missouri, first as schoolmaster, country editor and lawyer at a village called Louisiana. During the same period Harmon was making his first splash into politics by becoming Mayor of Wyoming, a suburb of Cincinnati, but the next year, that of the great centennial at Philadelphia, he was to become judge of the Court of Common Pleas, in the neighboring city. The Underwoods now returned to their native Kentucky, settling at Louisville when Oscar was a cherubic lad of fifteen. And this period of the seventies was wound up by Harmon's stepping up to the Superior Court in the same year when Taft graduated second among 121 in Yale, class of '78, of which he was salutatorian and class orator. The same autumn he entered the Cincinnati Law School, whence Harmon and Clark had departed with their sheepskins eleven and three years before, respectively. The next spring Woodrow Wilson and La Follette graduated at Princeton and the University of Wisconsin, both, like Taft, entering immediately into the law.

Taft Licked the Editor.

It was while he was finishing his first year in law school that Taft figured for the first time in the printed news of the day. In April, 1875, a sensational weekly, edited in Cincinnati, published some calumnies which the young Yale rusher construed as reflecting upon a member of his family. A published account of the calumniator's punishment states that "Mr. Will Taft, a tall, powerful, athletic young man, about twenty-one years of age," visited the editor forthwith. "Will Taft," this news item goes on to say, "is only a year or so out of Yale, where he developed his muscle at the manly exercise of the college, and he seems to have retained it." Then follows an account of the challenge and chastisement of the mudslinger, who "went off bleeding and pale, with his head well punched." Soon afterward this athletic defender of his family's honor began to earn his first money—$6 a week—by doing law reporting for the Cincinnati papers.

The year 1880 may be marked as that in which all of our candidates except Harmon, the eldest, and Underwood, the youngest, were to start together in a neck-and-neck race. Roosevelt in that year graduated from Harvard, and began his career without further scholastic training. Taft, La Follette and Wilson, after finishing at law school the same summer, were admitted to the bar, while Champ Clark moved to Bowling Green, his present home, where he at once began to practice law and make a fresh start in life. In this same year of his finishing at law school La Follette made a quick stride by becoming county prosecutor.

Teddy Quick to Marry.

But before this race could fairly begin, Dan Cupid was to have a reckoning with three of the contestants in short order. In the autumn following his graduation Roosevelt married his first wife, Alice Lee. He had lately inherited a snug fortune—sometimes estimated at a quarter of a million dollars—from his father, Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., glass importer, banker and philanthropist.

During the next year Clark and La Follette married in the same month. But Taft, who now became assistant county prosecutor of Cincinnati, was not to take a souse until five years later. In 1882, when Roosevelt entered upon his active political career as member of the New York Assembly, President Arthur appointed Taft collector of internal revenue for the first district of Ohio, and Woodrow Wilson moved to Atlanta, Ga., to practice law for a year. About this time Underwood was earning his sheepskin at the University of Virginia, where Joseph W. Bailey, now Senator from Texas, was also a student.

The year of 1884 was a sad one for Roosevelt. On Valentine's day his young wife died, when their daughter—the present Mrs. Longworth—was two days old, and within a few hours the future President also lost his mother, the two being buried together. A few months later the young widower was elected delegate-at-large to the convention which nominated Garfield. After the convention he put out for his ranch in North Dakota, there to remain two years. He now got out his "Trips of a Ranchman," and Woodrow Wilson at the same time brought forth his "Study in American Politics." In that same year, 1885, the latter—then known as Thomas Woodrow Wilson—married at Savannah, Ga., his bride being, like himself a parson's child.

Wilson Teaches Girls' College.

It was now that Wilson gave up the law and chose the course that was later to earn his title, "The schoolmaster in politics." Soon after returning from his honeymoon he accepted the chair of history and political economy at Bryn Mawr, the big woman's college near Philadelphia. The same year Taft entered upon a two-year term as assistant county solicitor, in Cincinnati; Clark became prosecuting attorney of his county and La Follette made his congressional debut as a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, now headed by Underwood. La Follette at that time wore a small mustache, along with his pompadour.

Two of our candidates married the following year—1886. Taft led off in June by wedding Helen, the sweetheart of his youth, to whom he had been true during the years that he had been earning his own home. They went abroad on a honeymoon which took them through the garden spots of Europe. That was the summer Roosevelt, who had tired of ranch life and returned to the metropolis, was making his unsuccessful campaign for Mayor of New York. After the election he went abroad, and on December 2—nearly three years after the death of his first wife—married the present Mrs. Roosevelt in London, where she was visiting. During the succeeding year Roosevelt finished two books, and Taft, by what now appears as a coincidence, stepped into the shoes of his older rival, Harmon. The latter resigned his place on the Superior Court bench and Governor Foraker—later to quarrel with Taft and Roosevelt—appointed Taft to the vacancy.

This was the beginning of Taft's judicial career. A year later he was elected to succeed himself for five years. Wilson now left the girls' college at Bryn Mawr and became professor of history and political economy at Wesleyan University.

Meeting of Taft and Teddy.

The couple of years that followed were to see the coming together of Taft and Roosevelt in Washington and the forging of their close bond of friendship, which was to last during the next twenty years. After Harrison's inauguration Roosevelt came first as civil service commissioner and Taft followed as solicitor-general. They met frequently at the mansion of their mutual friend, Bellamy Storer, who then represented in Congress the present Cincinnati district of his kinsman, Nicholas Longworth, Roosevelt's son-in-law. La Follette was now busy helping to frame the McKinley tariff bill, and Wilson the same year shifted chairs at Wesleyan, taking that of "jurisprudence and politics." Clark was serving his second year in the Missouri Legislature. But Taft's career in Washington was to last only two years, for in 1892 Harrison elevated him to the Federal bench, where, as circuit judge, he was to remain until McKinley should put him in charge of affairs in the Philippines.

In the year of the World's Fair at Chicago, Champ Clark, a giant of forty-three, wearing the pair of mustachios which make his accompanying photograph look far from Champish, made his debut in the House of Representatives, which La Follette had left two years before, and which Underwood was to enter two years later. Roosevelt now remained with the new Cleveland regime as Republican member of the civil service commission, but left in two years to become president of the New York police board, under Strong, the fusion Mayor. The same year Clark also left Washington life temporarily, while Harmon made his debut therein—as Attorney-General of the Cleveland Cabinet. A year later Taft and Harmon are brother professors in the Cincinnati Law School, where Taft is dean; Roosevelt finishes his "Winning of the West," Wilson gets out his "Life of George Washington" and La Follette goes as delegate to the convention which nominates McKinley for his first campaign against Bryan.

Events Now Fall Fast.

With the coming of McKinley events for all concerned commence to fall quick and fast. After his hiatus of one term Clark returns to Congress, where Underwood is beginning his second term. Roosevelt also returns to Washington—now as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. Then fall in rapid succession the explosion of the Maine, the organization of the Rough Riders by Roosevelt and Wood, the charge of San Juan hill and Roosevelt's election as Governor of New York, all in the year 1898.

How these racers have since run together is pretty clear in your memory. The same year in which Roosevelt was elected Vice-President, Taft took charge of the Philippines, and La Follette was elected Governor of his State. Then followed Roosevelt's succession of McKinley, and the next year Woodrow Wilson's selection as President of Princeton, and La Follette's re-election as Governor.

T. R. Picked Taft in '06.

In the campaign year 1904 there was something stirring for all the contestants, except Harmon. Taft was made Secretary of War, Roosevelt was elected President, La Follette was made Governor for the third term, Underwood and Clark were re-elected to Congress, the latter having been chosen permanent chairman of the convention that nominated Parker, and chairman of the committee that notified that candidate of his nomination. Then La Follette, in '05, comes to the Senate; Taft, in '06, adjusts the insurrection in Cuba, and declines an appointment to the United States Supreme Court offered him by Roosevelt, who replies to his declination in a letter stating: "There are strong arguments against your taking this justiceship. In the first place, my belief is that of all men who have appeared so far you are the man who is most likely to receive the Republican nomination, and who is, I think, the best man to receive it."

Next followed Taft's trip around the world, in '07, and his election to the presidency, in 08, in which year Harmon wa chosen Governor, Clark became minority leader of the House, thus paving his way for the speakership, to which he succeded three years later, when Underwood became chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, with its vastly augmented powers, and Wilson became Governor of New Jersey.

Thus have these seven ambitious men run side by side in the great race for power and glory. In a couple of months all will have dropped out save two—or will it be three?

LA FOLLETTE,
While in the House.

JUDSON HARMON,
When in Cleveland's Cabinet.

CHAMP CLARK,
When he entered Congress.

OSCAR W. UNDERWOOD,
as a beginner in Congress.

ARVONIA

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

Arvonia, Va., April 13.—Mrs. Ralph Chandler Root was called to her home in Indianapolis, Ind., this week on account of the illness of her father.

Miss Hattie Foland, who has been visiting at the home of Mrs. A. L. Pitts, has returned to her home in Scottsville.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Williams, of Lynchburg, are spending some time with Mr. Williams's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Williams.

Mrs. Joel Mable, of Decatur, Ga., is here to spend several weeks with her daughter, Mrs. Charles Fontaine LeSueur.

Miss Macie Williams, who has been visiting friends in Richmond, has returned to her home here.

Mr. and Mrs. William Pierce, of Philadelphia, are spending some time with friends and relatives here.

Mr. and Mrs. E. E. Crooke and daughter, Margaret, of Washington, D. C., arrived at the Arvonia Inn on Monday. They will remain here for several weeks.

R. B. Hughes visited friends and relatives in Scottsville on Sunday.

Mrs. Plummer F. Jones and Miss Winnie Almeda Pitts were visitors in Richmond on Friday.

Miss Florence Pettit, who is attending the Arvonia High School this winter, visited her home in Fluvanna county this week.

M. L. A. Moseley, of Tucker, was a visitor here last week.

Ralph Chandler Root, of Penlan, will spend the month of April at Arvonia Inn.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Fuqua, of Roanoke, are the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Fuqua.

LEXINGTON

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

Lexington, Va., April 13.—Mr. and Miss Demoresque, of New Orleans, are spending the winter at Mrs. Morgan Pendleton's.

Miss Kennedy, of Kansas City, Mo., has been the guest of Captain and Mrs. Alpha Brumage for the past week.

Miss Laura Pendleton, who has been spending the Easter holidays with her mother, Mrs. Morgan Pendleton, has returned to Baltimore, where she is a pupil at the Peabody Institute.

Dr. W. C. Bell, the former rector of the Robert E. Lee Memorial Church, and his wife have been the guests of Colonel and Mrs. Beverly Tucker during the Easter holidays. Dr. Bell now occupies the chair of divinity at the Theological Seminary in Alexandria.

Sergeant Rene Wilson, a retired commissary sergeant of the United States Army, has reported to the superintendent and has been assigned to the quartermaster and commissary departments for duty.

Miss Watkins, of Farmville, was the guest of Colonel and Mrs. Kerlin during the Easter holidays.

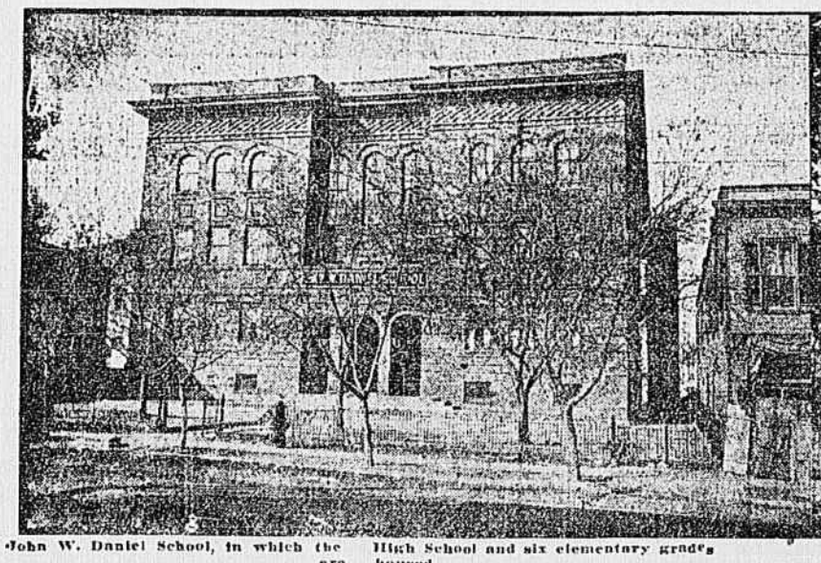
Mr. and Mrs. Easley, of Richmond, were in Lexington last week, visiting their son, Cadet Easley, of the third class.

W. A. Burress, '14, was in Richmond last week.

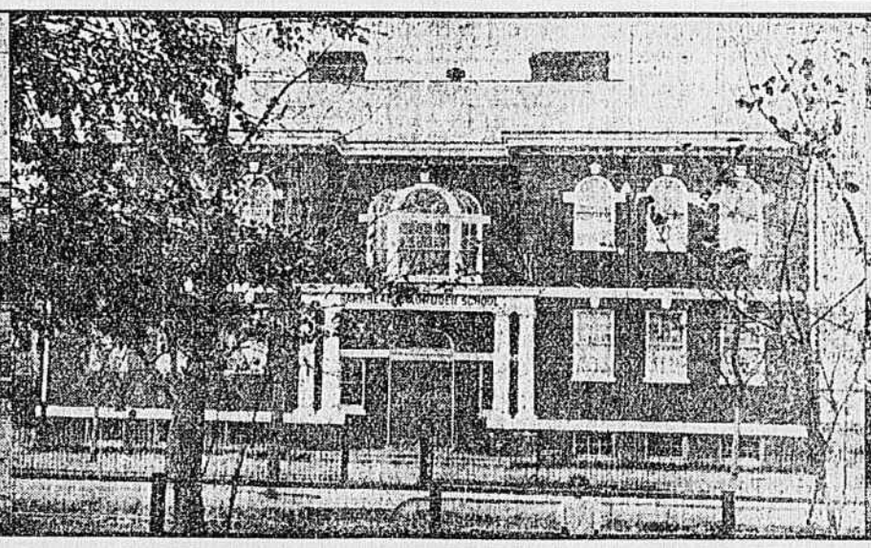
S. Marshall, '14, has been in Charlottesville attending to important business.

Mrs. Vaughan and daughter, of Franklin, paid a short visit to their son, Cadet Vaughan, of the fourth class.

Newport News Is Justly Proud of Its Public Schools



John W. Daniel School, in which the High School and six elementary grades are housed.



Bankhead-Magruder School, in East End, used for elementary grades.

Thomas Jefferson School, completed a year ago and regarded as a model elementary grade school.

NEWPORT NEWS, VA., April 6.—Newport News is justly proud of its public school system. There are bigger systems elsewhere in the State, with more and larger buildings, but from a standpoint of equipment and efficiency it is doubtful, local school authorities say, if the local system is surpassed by any in Virginia.

It was a bare sixteen years ago that the public school system of Newport News was founded, and when that fact is considerd, the progress made is little short of remarkable. However, it was not until some six years ago that the schools really began to be developed and brought up to the accepted standards in other American cities. The new systems have been worked out, and the institutions are up-to-date in every particular.

All of the latest methods of instruction are employed, Superintendent Willis A. Jenkins seeing to this. Much of the present efficiency of the schools is due to the untiring efforts of this official. He is one of the foremost public school men of the State, and he believes that the best is none too good for Newport News.

The one thing needed to give this city rank among even the biggest cities of the State, so far as school facilities are concerned, is an up-to-date high school. The agitation for this building is already on, and it will come within two years. It is proposed to build a structure to cost $100,000.

When asked to give briefly the distinctive features of the local school system for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Superintendent Jenkins prepared the following statement:

"In giving you an account of the distinctive features of the public school system of Newport News, I would say, first, that Newport News is a public school town. The only schools in the city except the public schools, are the Catholic Parochial School, with about 200 pupils, a small primary school, white, with about a dozen small children, one private colored school, with 20 children, and the Huntington Kindergarten. The last-named school is a public school to all intents and purposes, no tuition fee being charged. It admits first, the children of the men working in the shipyard, and then enough of the children of the other citizens to bring the enrolment to the full quota of about 125."

"I say Newport News is a public school town not only because so large a proportion of the school population is in the public schools, but because the City Council and the public generally are enthusiastic in their support."

"It is a great mistake and a common error of the people of this city to say that we have more children than the other cities in Virginia, though I believe we have quite a large proportion in the public schools."

"Newport News was incorporated into a city in 1896, with a population of about 9,000 people. Our school system in 1896-97 had a school enrolment of 1,134. In 1900, our population was 19,635, and the school enrolment 2,209. In 1910, our population was 20,205, and our school enrollment was 2,114. Like every other new city, Newport News had a small school population until within the last few years. In 1906 our population was largely made up of men whose families lived elsewhere.

To-day we have the families of the men with us, and now our school population is about 25 per cent. of our gross population."

"We began in 1896 with nothing in the way of school property. To-day we have school buildings valued at $110,000, all equipped with modern seats, maps, globes, libraries, and other apparatus. There are eight school houses, five for whites and three for colored. There are 66 rooms and a seating capacity of 2,772. In addition there is one rented school building for whites with a seating capacity of 300."

"There are 79 teachers employed in our school system, 61 white and 18 colored. In the white schools there are five principals, four supervisors in elementary work. The special departments are manual training, drawing and music. Of the colored teachers, three are principals and two are special teachers, one of manual training and the other of domestic science."

"The growth of our high school, however, is the particular pride of the school authorities and the people generally. In 1897 there were 19 pupils in the high school. In 1902 there were 92 in the High school, and in 1907 there were 197. This year there are 325 pupils enrolled. There are eleven instructors in the high school, with special departments in commercial branches, domestic science and manual training."

"The unit system will be worked out in the high school next year and then the school will be as modern as any high school in the State."

With 2,000 children enrolled in the white schools, 325 in the high school is a very satisfactory percentage.

"Our schools are open to inspection and we invite visitors. I believe we may pride ourselves upon the work done in the class room. This is due first to the fact that our school rooms are built for 10 pupils, and we have no more than 40 pupils under any one teacher, except in the first grade, which is a double grade, one set of pupils coming for the morning session and another set coming in the afternoon."

"We employ only professionally trained teachers, except in emergencies after the schools open and when trained teachers cannot be had."

"Our supervision, we believe, is competent and adequate. Our teachers' meetings are thoroughly organized and the teaching corps is being instructed in the most approved methods of teaching."

"The parents of the children show a great interest in the schools. We have five white patrons' leagues, each of which holds a meeting each month. The total attendance at these meetings last session was more than 2,000. The co-operation between the school and home, teacher and parent, is one of the strongest points of the Newport News school system.

"But it is not only in the class room that we teach the boys and girls. We pay particular attention to athletics and are proud of our football, baseball and basketball teams for the boys and our basketball teams for the girls.

"We also are proud of our literary societies. There are two of these bodies in the high school, and each holds two meetings every month. There the children are schooled in delivering addresses, debating, reciting, singing and playing musical instruments. I regard this training as of great importance to both the boys and the girls, because it gives them self-reliance.

"Another important feature of the Newport News schools is the night schools, six of which were opened this session, with a enrolment of about 200 boys. The pupils are boys who are working in the shipyard learning trades and who have not had the opportunity to study in schools. These schools have the approval of and co-operation of the shipyard officials and General Manager Homer L. Ferguson has been very instrumental in getting them launched.

"Practical courses, which will be of use to the boys in their work at the shipyard, are taught by instructors from the yard, all college men, who have had practical training here and elsewhere.

"It is a test of merit for boys who work all day to study at night, but thus far the boys have taken advantage of their opportunities and are working hard. They realize that they can make themselves more useful in their daily work and will be better mechanics and better citizens by reason of having attended these schools.

"Reports are made on each boy each week, and those reports go to the head of the department in the yard in which the boys are employed. If the lads make good in the schools they have their terms of apprenticeship reduced from four to three years, the saving of a year for the boys.

"Both our day schools and our night schools are flourishing, and the only thing we need to make the system entirely up-to-date and as good as any to be found anywhere is a modern high school building. That will come in the course of the next two years."